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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

God, the fountain of every blessing, in this Thanksgiving season, we praise Your Holy Name. May the lives of our lawmakers please You. Inspire them to walk in Your ways, keeping Your precepts with such integrity that they will glorify Your Name. Incline their hearts to Your wisdom and provide them with the understanding they need to accomplish Your purposes.

Lord God, let Your mercy protect our Senators from the dangers of this life, as they learn to find delight in receiving Your approval. Keep them ever mindful of life's brevity and the greatness of their work.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate for 1 minute as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, probably a lot of my colleagues know I have had a quarter-century interest in legislation dealing with foster care and the foster care system. This is National Adoption Month, and while recent data

from the Department of Health and Human Services show improvements for kids in foster care, it is clear that there is still work to be done.

In 2018, the average length of stay in foster care increased to over 19 months. We need to take that statistic as movement in the wrong direction. Less than half of the kids who exited foster care were reunited with their parents. Our goal ought to be to reunite them with their parents when it isn't harmful to the kids, but what I have also learned over the last 25 years from talking to kids who are in foster care, being shunted from home to home, school to school in the same school year—I have heard from them, “I would like to have a mom and dad,” and “I would like to have a permanent home.”

I have taken that to heart, and legislation that I have worked on helps with that issue. All children deserve a permanent home, and they deserve caring, consistent adults to nurture and guide them. As long as I serve in Congress, I will continue to work toward that goal.

Also, during this month of November, National Adoption Month, I hope people will take a special concern about kids who are in foster care.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA AGREEMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, Washington and the cable news channels have spent the week fixated on House Democrats' impeachment hearings.

A few months ago, Speaker PELOSI was saying she was not “for impeachment” unless it was “bipartisan.” But even after the resolution codifying the Democrats' unfair process received zero

Republican votes, the House plowed ahead anyway, searching for a way to arrive at an outcome the Democrats literally predetermined years ago.

Meanwhile, the American people are still waiting for Washington Democrats to stop blocking crucial bipartisan legislation. I spoke yesterday about the USMCA, the landmark trade deal that experts say would create 176,000 American jobs. For 9 months, Speaker PELOSI has told the press every couple of weeks that she will allow a vote soon. Last winter, she was “optimistic”; over the summer, “We want to pass this bill”; this fall, “becoming closer”; and a couple of weeks ago, “I think we are close.”

We have had months of this stalling. Now we are 1 week out from Thanksgiving, and there is still no tangible sign—none—of progress from the House. If the House cannot pass the USMCA this year, there is no way they will be able to claim that the people's business has not taken a back seat to impeachment.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, on another matter, the USMCA is not the only important legislation Democrats are holding up. As if neglecting the first major update to North American trade policy in a generation were not enough, they are also on track to break a nearly 60-year tradition of passing a bipartisan Defense authorization bill.

Passing the NDAA is one of Congress's most basic governing responsibilities. It authorizes and assures the ongoing missions of our Armed Forces and the resources the Department of Defense needs to carry them out.

Every year since 1961, these goals have been enough to get Members across the ideological spectrum to

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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